

**TOWN OF GRANBY
BOARD OF FINANCE
MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
APRIL 29, 2013**

PRESENT: Michael Guarco, Chairman; Frederick Moffa, OD; and Francis Brady (who arrived at 7:38 p.m.)

Also present: John E. Adams, First Selectman; William F. Smith, Jr., Town Manager; J. Cal Heminway, Board of Education Chair; and Alan Addley, Superintendent of Schools

Board of Finance Chairman Guarco called the public hearing to order at 7:04 p.m. He introduced the Board of Finance members. He opened the hearing by stating that according to Town Charter a hearing is held on the second Monday in April to present the budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget referendum was held on Monday, April 22, 2013, where the budget was voted down 617 to 514. The Board of Finance met and reduced the budget by \$330,000. Another public hearing is held the following Monday (tonight), with another vote the Monday after that.

Chairman Guarco stated the order in which presentations would be made: revised town operations budget, revised school operations budget, and questions and answers or comments would follow.

Chairman Guarco gave a quick overview of the revised budget. Highlights were:

- 1.82% revised budget increase
- 1.3% is the change in current property tax levy
- The 1.3% - 0.34% is from additions to the grand list and 0.96% is from the new mill rate
- The mill rate was 30.69 for FY 2013 and the increase to the revised proposed mill rate after revaluation is 34.83 for FY 2014

First Selectman Adams presented the revised Selectmen's Budget. He thanked the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager Smith, and Barbarajean Scibelli, Administration Finance Officer, for all their work on the budget. He stated there have been eight opportunities for the public to have input regarding the budget. He spoke about the town having received the Democracy Cup for a second time. This award is based on having, in the category of mid-sized towns, the highest turnout percentage of registered voters on Election Day, an award Granby should be proud of. He said that on April 22, 2013 there was a turnout of 15% of voters at the poll. He reminded everyone to vote on Monday, May 6, 2013, from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. Absentee ballots are now available at the Town Clerk's office.

Some revised budget highlights from slides were:

- Capital Projects completed include: Silver Street Bridge is almost complete, Cossitt Library land acquisition, Tennis Court replacement, Granby Library roof replacement, Emergency generator project is almost complete, and the Granby Memorial High School's Electronics Lab. Projects in progress include: Salmon Brook Park Pond House; Streetscapes and sidewalks – estimated to be completed next year; Wash Bay and Storage addition at Public Works; and Evonsion land purchase – barns have been

torn down, bulky waste is being removed and property is leased and will be farmed by local farmers this year.

First Selectman Adams noted the \$80,000 in reductions including library hours, regular payroll cuts, Detective/Youth Service Officer position would now start mid way through the year, and Police Department overtime cuts. He stated this would result in decreased services. The reduction breakdowns are as follows:

• Administration	\$19,500
• Debt Service	\$0
• Public Works & Environment	\$9,000
• Personal & Property Protection	\$37,500
• Capital Budget	\$0
• Libraries, Recreation & Social Services	\$14,000
• CNEF Levy	\$0
• Economic Development Funds	<u>\$0</u>
TOTAL	\$80,000

First Selectman Adams continued, noting the budget includes the hiring of a Detective who will also serve as a youth services officer at a projected salary of \$47,500. Also added is \$35,000 to the overtime budget for police. Solid Waste & Recycling Collection had \$12,165 allotted. Within the Department of Public Works, approximately \$35,672 of the increases in costs is associated with the upkeep and maintenance of Holcomb Farm and the new Pond House. Library Personnel hours include \$3,370. Other notable changes in the budget were Library Connections Consortium – \$29,113 (this up front expense will help reduce the cost of interlibrary collections within the next two years); and Social-Senior-Youth Grant Fall Off – \$5,000 that the town picks up.

First Selectman Adams stated the town staff is the same now as it was in 1986.

J. Cal Heminway, Jr., Board of Education Chairman, gave the school's revised budget presentation. He encouraged the public to refer to the Budget Booklet for further information. He acknowledged the declining enrollment and noted Granby Memorial High School is ranked 13th in the state and is considered a high performance school. He stated the single objective is a "yes" vote.

He summarized the school budget cuts as follows:

• Elementary Spanish Teacher	\$69,835
• Math/Science Consulting Teacher	\$69,835
• ½ Guidance Position (Director)	\$31,330
• Gifted & Talented	\$30,000
• Reduce Heating Oil & Bus Diesel	<u>\$49,000</u>
TOTAL	\$250,000

PUBLIC INPUT FY 2013-14 REVISED BUDGET

Board of Finance Chairman Guarco opened the budget discussion to the public.

There were approximately forty comments from residents. The Republican and Democratic Town Chairmen, after thanking the boards for their hard work, also spoke in favor of restoring

the funds cut. A few students addressed the meeting, in Spanish, asking that language be added to the curriculum of the elementary schools. Comments highlighted included:

- A parent stated there is a signed petition opposing the \$250,000 cut to the BOE budget.
- The overall consensus of those in attendance was to reinstate the \$330,000, especially the \$250,000 school portion.
- The gifted and talented portion of the budget should not be cut again this year.
- People move to Granby for the good school system and the open space.
- Foreign language programs in the elementary schools should not be cut.
- Consideration should be given to the economic impact and return on the investment of real estate and schools. There is concern regarding the declining enrollment.
- One resident stated there is still a significant increase in the budget even after the cuts.
- There were questions regarding the increased mill rate, based on revaluation.
- Several times it was asked that the original budget be reinstated and voted on again. Board of Finance Chairman Guarco commented that happened many years ago, only to find the budget was defeated by twice as many no votes.
- Regarding reinstating the Gifted and Talented program, some parents spoke about sending their children to a Magnet School, and the town has to pay for that student to go there.
- Resident speaking in favor of the language programs stated it is necessary in order to stay competitive with surrounding towns.
- One resident asked if a questionnaire could be given to residents after they vote. It would give the Boards feedback on why residents voted as they did.
- There were a few residents, who specifically asked that the funds to restore library hours not be cut.
- Residents asked what happens next. Chairman Guarco explained, the Board of Finance would meet and discuss the comments heard at tonight's meeting. They will then decide whether to reinstate the budget as originally proposed, reinstate a portion of the budget as proposed, or move forward to vote on the Revised Proposed Budget. If the Revised Proposed Budget is voted on and is defeated, then the budget will most likely be cut further.
- Not all students are gifted and talented and all students should be considered when setting up programs.
- One resident, who was an advocate to change the budget acceptance to a machine vote, stated he was disappointed in the low voter turn out.
- Many residents thanked the Boards for their work on the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further public input, Chairman Guarco adjourned the public hearing at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Christian
Acting Recording Secretary